



State of Arizona Accounting Manual

Topic 50 Travel
Section 25 Meals and Incidentals

Issued 88/88/88
Page 1 of 5

INTRODUCTION

The cost of meals purchased and consumed while traveling on State business may, up to the limits approved by the JLBC, be reimbursed. The reimbursement rates are not designed to cover the entire cost of meals consumed on the road, but to cover the difference between the cost of a meal of which the traveler might otherwise partake when not traveling for the State and the cost of a meal acquired while traveling for the State.

POLICIES

1. Reimbursement rates for meals are proposed by the ADOA Director, reviewed and approved by the JLBC, and published by the ADOA.
2. Meals, the cost of which are less than or equal to the published limits, may be reimbursed when purchased and consumed in conjunction with official State business.
3. To be eligible for reimbursement, the meal must, except as otherwise provided, be consumed while the traveler is in travel status.
4. To be in travel status, a traveler must be more than fifty (50) miles from both the traveler's residence and his regular duty post.
5. Meals that are reimbursed to a traveler when the travel does not involve an overnight stay or a substantial period of sleep or rest are taxable income to the traveler.
6. Reimbursement for meals may not exceed the lesser of the actual amount paid for the meal and incidentals or maximum meal and incidentals reimbursement rate.
7. The meal reimbursement rate includes the cost of the meal, tax, tip and the cost of transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are acquired or consumed, if meals can be obtained within a reasonable distance from lodging or duty post.
8. Although they frequently do so, the amounts allowed for meals and incidentals are not intended to cover the entire cost of meals consumed while in travel status. The amounts, however, are more than sufficient to compensate the traveler for the estimated difference between the cost of a reasonable meal taken on the road and

State of Arizona Accounting Manual

Topic 50 Travel
Section 25 Meals and Incidentals

Issued 88/88/88
Page 2 of 5

the cost of a meal prepared at home or purchased at a cafeteria operating in a State facility.

9. If the traveler does not purchase a meal or the cost of the meal is imbedded in some other cost, the traveler is not entitled to reimbursement. Situations to which this applies include, but are not limited to meals provided:
 - 9.1. At conferences that are free of cost beyond the registration fee.
 - 9.2. On airplanes and other common carries and are included in the fare.
 - 9.3. To the traveler, without charge, as a State institution.
 - 9.4. On a complimentary basis by the facility at which one is lodged.
10. Meal reimbursements and the maximum meal and incidentals reimbursement rates are not per diem allowances.
11. A traveler may not claim reimbursement for more than three (3) meals in any single calendar day or in any period of twenty-four (24) consecutive hours.
12. A travel day of less than eighteen (18) consecutive hours shall be considered a partial day and entitle the traveler to meal reimbursements, based upon amounts actually paid, in accordance with the partial day meal reimbursement limits set forth immediately below:
 - 12.1. Six (6) consecutive hours in travel status entitles the traveler to be reimbursed for up to one (1) meal.
 - 12.2. Twelve (12) consecutive hours in travel status entitles the traveler to be reimbursed for up to two (2) meals.
13. Incidentals include such things as baggage handling tips, chamber maid tips, newspapers, etc.
14. Tips paid in connection with a meal are considered as part of the cost of a meal.
15. Tips that exceed industry standards are not to be reimbursed.
 - 15.1.1. The industry standard for tips related to a meal served in a restaurant in the U.S. is between fifteen percent (15%) to twenty percent (20%) of the pre-tax bill.
 - 15.1.2. The industry standard for tips related to a meal served in a buffet, fast food or carry-out establishment is zero percent (0%).
16. For days the traveler is actually traveling (i.e. en route) between regular and temporary duty posts or duty posts and his residence, he may be entitled to be

State of Arizona Accounting Manual

Topic 50 Travel
Section 25 Meals and Incidentals

Issued 88/88/88
Page 3 of 5

reimbursed for a meal within the limits prescribed for partial day meal reimbursements.

17. Policies related to meals provided at conferences and seminars are contained in another section of SAAM.
18. Meals to be consumed within fifty (50) miles of a traveler's home or duty post may be authorized for reimbursement when the head (or his delegate) of a traveler's agency:
 - 18.1. Determines that, in terms of economy or efficiency, it is in the best interest of the State to reimburse the employee for a meal; and
 - 18.2. Documents the justification of the decision to reimburse the employee for a meal; and
 - 18.3. Performs or produces and retains for audit:
 - 18.3.1. An analysis of the estimated per transaction savings in terms of cost or efficiency resulting from reimbursing the employee for a meal; and
 - 18.3.2. An estimate of the total annual financial impact on the State that results from such a variance, and;
 - 18.3.3. A written approval for each employee documenting the decision of the agency head or his delegate. This approval is to contain:
 - 18.3.3.1. The employee's name.
 - 18.3.3.2. The circumstances, conditions or types of service under which meals will be reimbursed when consumed within fifty (50) miles of the traveler's home or duty post.
 - 18.3.3.3. The period, not to exceed one (1) year, during which the approval will remain in effect.
 - 18.3.3.4. A statement to the effect that the approval will automatically expire when:
 - 18.3.3.4.1. Either, the agency head's tenure terminates.
 - 18.3.3.4.2. Or, the employee's duty assignment changes.
 - 18.3.3.5. The signed acknowledgement of the employee to whom the approval has been granted.
19. Meals satisfying special dietary needs will generally be provided by airlines, conferences, etc., if requested. It is the traveler's responsibility to make, on a timely basis, the necessary arrangements for such special needs. If the traveler's request

State of Arizona Accounting Manual

Topic 50 Travel
Section 25 Meals and Incidentals

Issued 88/88/88
Page 4 of 5

for a meal satisfying a special dietary need is denied, in order to claim a reimbursement for an expenditure related to a meal that otherwise would have been provided without cost to the traveler, the traveler must provide a statement that details and certifies:

- 19.1. To whom the request was made.
- 19.2. By whom the request was denied.
- 19.3. The reason given for the denial.
- 19.4. The special dietary needs of the traveler that could not otherwise have been accommodated.
20. To determine the correct rate for meals and incidentals, follow the instructions set forth below.
 - 20.1. For travel within the continental U.S.:
 - 20.1.1. Locate the topic of SAAM entitled "Travel Reimbursement Tables."
 - 20.1.2. Locate the "Meals and Incidentals" column.
 - 20.1.3. If the specific city is listed in the table, use the rate applicable to the city in which the meal is taken.
 - 20.1.4. If the city is not listed but the county is which the city is located is, use the rate applicable to the county in which the meal is taken.
 - 20.1.5. If neither the city nor the county is listed, use the default rate listed at the beginning of the table.
 - 20.2. For travel outside the continental U.S.:
 - 20.2.1. Go to the GAO Website (www.gao.state.az.us) and click on the Travel Info link.
 - 20.2.2. Click on the link to Out-of-Country/Alaska, Hawaii—Lodging and Meal Index, this will take one to the Depart of Defense website.
 - 20.2.3. Click on the Per Diem Rates, click on Per Diem Rates again.
 - 20.2.4. Under Outside CONUS, Non-foreign Overseas, and Foreign, select the appropriate Country/State from the drop down menu. The rate that applies to (i.e., limits the amount of reimbursement for) both meals and incidentals for Arizona travelers is the amount shown in the Local Meals column.
21. While receipts for meals and incidentals are not required by State policy, they may be required to be submitted or retained for audit by an agency's travel policy.

State of Arizona Accounting Manual

Topic 50 Travel
Section **25 Meals and Incidentals**

Issued 88/88/88
Page 5 of 5

22. Reimbursement for the purchase of alcoholic beverages or the taxes or tips related to the purchase of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
23. Unless an agency and/or its employees are granted specific statutory authority to do so, State employees may not be reimbursed for purchasing meals for non-State employees.
24. For meals and incidentals relating to travel period of more than thirty (3) days, refer to the Long-term Travel Topic of SAAM.
25. For conferences, conventions and meetings not hosted by the State, refer to the Non-State Conferences, Conventions and Meetings Topic of SAAM.
26. For conferences, conventions and meetings hosted by the State, refer to the State Conferences, Conventions and Meetings Topic of SAAM.
27. For travel matters relating to non-State employees, refer to the Non-State Employee Travel Topic of SAAM.
28. For matters relating to travel advances, refer to the Travel Advances Topic of SAAM.